

Good morning. I would first like to thank Chairman Guerrerra and Chairman Maynard and the entire Transportation Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is William Edgar, and I am the District 2 Councilor on the Enfield Town Council representing primarily the Thompsonville neighborhood. I am here today to testify in support of H.B. 6059, An Act Concerning the Construction of a Train Station in Thompsonville.

Last October I became very excited about Governor Malloy's announcement that Connecticut received \$120.9 million dollars in federal funding to support the construction of a light-rail line that would connect New Haven to Hartford to Springfield. Light-rail construction is known to bring transit-oriented development to communities, and this plan would strengthen Connecticut's economy by better connecting the New Haven-Springfield corridor. This plan would also better connect us to the economies in the greater New York and greater Boston areas, and eventually the plan would connect us to Montreal.

The current plan lists Enfield as a potential site for a light rail station, and I am here today to advocate that Enfield receives a station. With approximately 45,000 residents, Enfield is the hub of North Central Connecticut. Many of our residents are employed both in Hartford and Springfield, and we also have Asnuntuck Community College in our town. Due to our geographic location, Enfield also draws on residents from surrounding communities such as Suffield, Somers, Longmeadow and East Windsor for shopping and other needs.

Therefore, it would only make sense to place a light rail station in Enfield because we are the main economic center north of Hartford. A light rail station in Enfield would not only be utilized by Enfield residents. Commuters from Suffield, Somers, Longmeadow, East Windsor and other locations would come to Enfield in order to travel on the light-rail line. In fact, I do not think Connecticut could take full advantage of this light rail plan without putting a station in Enfield because we stand as such a strong geographic and economic hub north of Hartford.

Specifically, I would like to see the light-rail station placed within the Thompsonville neighborhood of Enfield. Thompsonville is a wonderfully historic borough that is located conveniently close to Interstate 91 and Route 5. The proposed light-rail line tracks also runs directly through Thompsonville, and therefore, Thompsonville is the most logical location for a light-rail station in Enfield. Furthermore, Thompsonville could greatly benefit from the transit-orientated development that would occur once a station goes online. Many Thompsonville business owners have come to me and told me that they would greatly welcome the light-rail station because it would greatly improve the economic climate within the neighborhood. Thus, I am here today to tell you that Thompsonville would welcome a light rail station with open arms.

I also come here today to express my alarm about some of the current changes to the light rail plan. It is my understanding that the light-rail plan now might not be double-tracked north of Hartford. This does not make sense to me because I feel that this rail line will not serve as a gateway to Boston and New York without being fully double-tracked. I also feel that Connecticut would not be taking advantage of the strong economy and significant population that exists north of Hartford. Furthermore, on January

14th of this year the Commonwealth of Massachusetts agreed to invest \$362.4 million to better support train connections between Springfield and Boston. Massachusetts did this in order to utilize our light-rail plan as a means to better connect Boston to New York. The economic benefits that would result from better Boston to New York connectivity will not occur with single-tracked service north of Hartford. For the sake of the New Haven-Springfield economy, I humbly ask the Department of Transportation to double-track this rail line north of Hartford as originally planned.

As an Enfield Town Councilor and a leader within the Thompsonville community, I come to you today to as someone who wants to work as a partner with the Department of Transportation and other state leaders in order to make a Thompsonville Light Rail Station a reality. We understand that we live in a world of scarce resources, and that is why open dialogue and communication is critical. It is my intention that Enfield will work to make the changes that the state requires in terms of zoning and other issues in order to make our town the best possible option for a light rail station. In closing, I know firsthand that Enfield has made a possible light-rail station their biggest priority. This station would be a game changer for us by bringing transit-oriented development to our community, and it will better connect the strong economy of North Central Connecticut to Hartford, Springfield, New Haven and yes, Boston and New York. I thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today.